

The Self-Evident Word of God

Domenic Marbaniang

Anyone reading the New Testament will immediately be able to observe a few distinctive things:

1. Variety. There is a great variety of styles by different authors. It is not just the perspective of one person. We find here the united testimony of several authors from various backgrounds and perspectives, doctors, government officials, theologians, and fishermen. Yet, they all share the same faith.

2. Sincerity. Not only the tone and the appeal is sincere, but the testimonies of life are also outstandingly genuine. Luke writes about the life of Paul and Peter also mentions him. Then, Paul himself speaks a few times about how he came to know Christ, about the spiritual revelation, about the presence and power of Christ through the Holy Spirit. What a testimony! What a sacrifice! Would anyone, and such intellectuals as Paul and Luke, dare to forsake everything to live such lives unless they were really encountered by God? Every word they spoke bore marks of sincerity. The words themselves prove them.

3. Unity. There is one uniting theme throughout the New Testament, the Gospel of the Cross of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead. "Christ died" was not just a secular phenomenon; it was a divine rendezvous.

"Christ rose again" was the pinpoint where all history blended with the reality of the final purpose of God. The death of Christ puts an end to the Old Covenant; the resurrection of Christ liberates us into the new world of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. They all look back at the cross and draw their energy from it.

4. Certainty. All the Biblical writers are fully convinced of the truth they proclaim. We may have doubts about it today; but, they had seen Christ, touched Him, and gazed at Him intently (1John 1:1). There was no mistake about this. The hundreds of these believers, and in no way behind in intelligence and sensibility, were completely assured of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Faith was rock-certain.

5. Cogency. The proclamation of the New Testament is consistent and clear. The Gospels, the Book of Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation all evince unity, intelligibility, credibility, and strong proofs for the points being made. Luke refers to Christ's testimony as grounded on many irrefutable proofs. Christ's teaching is rational against the superstitious and false interpretations of the religious leaders of the time. Paul's writings are not only full of experiential proofs but also attestations from the Old Testament and use of rational interpretation. Cogency is woven into the very fabric of Scripture.

6. Practicality. The Bible never just theorizes or gives out hypotheses or speculative formulations. It calls us to belief and action in conformity to the Truth it proclaims. It calls us to not just sit and immerse in some philosophical or metaphysical meditation. It calls us to a living faith in Jesus Christ. For instance, in Mark 16:17 Jesus says that they who believe will have these signs following: "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Of course, that doesn't mean that believers can now go and play with serpents and drink poison; for that would be falling into the kind of temptation that the devil brought to Jesus, the temptation that tries to use God at one's whim. But, it means that the believer has a faith that is not without substance. It is not a castle in the air. It is not made of "such stuff that dreams are made of". Faith is the substance (Hebrews 11:1). This is the living faith that the Bible calls us to and that will be manifest in the lives of believers. Every promise of the Scripture is true. And, so if anyone believes the words and acts according to them in sincerity and purity of heart, he/she will experience the presence and power of God in his/her own very practical day to day life. If this is not so, the boldness of the Scriptural calling is annulled. But, it is so that while there are many theories and goals in the world that people fantastically strive at (every time, the goal only appears

farther), the Bible calls to a simple faith in Jesus Christ by which one can receive every promise given for the believer therein, in reality and without any speck of doubt.

And, these are what zoom out of the Bible when we read it. It is impossible to cast it aside saying that all of them were either deluded or were imposters or were misled. No one can challenge their experiences, none can accuse them of falsehood or of credulity. Their words prove their sanity, their credibility, and their sincerity which is also repeatedly attested by testimonies by others. One cannot read the New Testament, and at the same time keep doubting it. The Scripture is self-evident.